"For Richer, for Poorer."

BY EDITH C. KENYON, AUTHOR OF "THE MOTHERS OF ILLUSTRIOUS MEN," ETC.

"You should go to your mother's sometimes." *p.* 130.

CHAPTER V.

TROUBLE IN THE HOME.

AFTER Dick had gone out Annie had a sad time, for on stooping to pick up a piece of paper on the carpet near the door, she found it was the upper flap of the envelope he had torn in opening, and it was stamped with the words, "Barton's Brewery Company." Then she understood why Dick had kept the nature of the business in which he had invested his money secret from her, and her heart ached because inadvertently she had "found him out."

"Baby," she said mournfully, taking up the child out of his cradle, and bursting into tears as she pressed him to her, "it's a poor look-out for us. He, father, husband, master, whom we have to obey and to whom we look for guidance, is fast becoming—blinded, baby, by the god of this world, wretched Mammon, so that he cannot see the dangers which are ahead."

The child began to cry, and, that she might quiet him, Annie ceased crying herself and in somewhat broken tones sang again her cradle song—

"Sleep, baby, sleep,
Our Saviour loves His sheep,"

until she, too, felt soothed and comforted.

That evening Dick came home flushed and excited. Gerald had explained to him that the company which had been formed had not worked the brewery as cleverly as the late owner of it had done, and, things being so, he advised Dick to take his money out of it at once. Then he persuaded him to go with him to his club—it was, alas! a gambling club—and, once there, Dick was easily induced to play for money.

Unfortunately for him, Dick won twenty pounds, and so went home in a high state of elation, after promising Gerald he would go to the club with him whenever he liked, and eventually might become a member.

"Dick," said Annie, lifting her face to be kissed when he said "Good-night,"—"you will take your money out of that—that business now?"

"That I will, dear," answered he, quickly; "I have made up my mind to do that. I can make much more of it elsewhere."

"Will you tell me what you put it in next time, Dick?" asked Annie, timidly.

"I think I shall put it in the Bank," he said, much to her relief; "it will be safe there, at any rate."

Annie was glad to hear that, and hoped he was repentant about having bought the brewery shares; but, as she was a wise woman, she said no more. Great would have been her horror, if she had known Dick

purposed keeping it in the Bank because there it would be handy for him when he wished to gamble with it.

As for him, he could not sleep for hours that night. He knew that he had fallen morally much lower than he had ever fallen before, and his conscience gave him some severe home thrusts; but he told himself that he was doing it all for Annie's sake and for their child's. Nothing is easier than self-deception, and so he persuaded himself that what he did from such an unselfish motive must be right. And yet, and yet! He was very unhappy. He felt severed from his wife in heart and mind, and the severance gave him pain.

From that day, or rather from that night, there was trouble in the home. For Annie was left much alone in the evenings, whilst Dick was out, she knew not where, though she suspected rightly with his cousin Gerald.

"You have baby and Jane with you," he said once, when she remonstrated with him.

"Baby and Jane!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Dick!" and her tone spoke volumes.

"You must not blame me," he said, hastily. "It is business that keeps me out in the evenings. I may tell you, dear, I do more work, and work that pays me better, too, in the evenings than in all the rest of the days put together."

"Won't you tell me what the business is?" pleaded Annie, lifting wistful eyes to his.

"Impossible! It is of a private nature! Besides, you would not understand it. There, there, don't cry. Let me go. I shall be late." He pushed his wife away, for she had risen and put her arms around his neck, and strode to the door. As he reached it, with frowning brow, an idea occurred to him, and, looking back, he said over his shoulder, "You should go to your mother's sometimes in an evening."

Annie was crying too much to be able to answer him, so she could not explain that she did not like to go to her mother's any more without him, for they made so many remarks there about his continual absence that she was weary of making excuses for him.

He hesitated a moment or two, as he stood looking at her crying in the old armchair. Did he remember that not far distant time when he desired nothing more than that he might make her as happy as the days were long? In the cradle near her was their little son, asleep, with one pink arm thrown over the coverlet, and a rosy flush on his wee countenance. Should he go to Annie and take her in his arms and comfort her by promising not to leave her so often, so very often? Or should he—for her sake he told himself—harden himself against the touching sight, and hurry away to try and win a larger sum than usual—for her? Quickly he decided that he would do the last, and so hastily left the room, and in a minute more the house.

Annie listened to the sound of his retreating footsteps and the closing of the hall-door after him, with an aching heart. What had changed him so? What attraction took him away from his home evening after evening, keeping him out often until the early morning hours?—it was his custom to let himself in then with his latch-key, as he had forbidden her to wait up for him. She thought she knew. It was money—some scheme which he and Gerald had concocted for getting more money. How she disliked the influence his cousin had over him! What a pity he had ever come to their house! The peace and happiness of their home seemed completely wrecked. In the daytime, whilst in the house, Dick was often so tired and sleepy from having lost the greater part of his night's rest, that he was irritable and ungracious as she had never known him before. And in the hours of early morning, when he slept, his sleep was troubled with ill dreams; he often sighed, once he wept, and now and then he shouted excited exclamations about losing money, or being cheated, and so on.

How would it all end? Would baby, as he grew up, never know his father as she had known him before those evil days? Would the fell influence of the love of mammon overshadow and do harm also to *his* young life?

She caught up the child and strained him to her breast so convulsively that he began to cry.

Then the sweet mother-voice arose in song, as she gently rocked him in her arms—

"Sleep, baby, sleep,
Our Saviour loves His sheep;
He is the Lamb of God on high,
Who for our sakes came down to die,
Sleep . . . baby, sleep . . ."

As she sang she grew calmer. It was not as if there were no Saviour near, whose mighty love encompassed them as with a shield. To that love she would commend her baby and herself—yes, and poor Dick too. Surely love must win, and if she besieged the gates of Heaven with prayers both night and day—why, surely its protecting influence would be hers, and nothing could prevail against that.

From this time a new calmness and the dignity of a lofty purpose were evinced by Dick's young wife. Dimly in his now preoccupied mind Dick perceived the change, and perceived also that she was in heart and mind still further removed from him. But slowly the painfulness of this knowledge passed away; he resigned himself to the fact, ceasing to rebel against it. She should go her way and he his; perhaps they would meet one day and be again as they had been. Vain hope when each was going in an exactly opposite direction!

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CHAPTER VI.

BESSIE REMONSTRATES.

"I AM glad the little darling is a girl, Bessie."

"Are you, dear? Now, I like boys best."

"But girls have not such temptations as men have," said Annie, her eyes resting mournfully upon her husband's empty chair in the opposite corner of the hearth.

It was two years since that evening when she had so vainly appealed to him to stay more at home with her. And now a tiny three-month-old girl lay in the cradle, whilst little Dick toddled about the floor bravely, and tried his infant powers of speech in a manner which was sometimes rather overwhelming to weak nerves. Since the birth of her little girl—named Mary, after her mother—Annie had not recovered her strength as she should have done. The doctor said she needed change of air and rest, freedom too from care, and cheerful surroundings. These things he said to Dick, who listened with

a gloomy brow, and straightway went out to his club, bent on gaining more money than ever, so that he might have the means to give Annie every luxury—so he told himself—and in the excitement of play he forgot all about the doctor's words and her immediate need. Then the doctor spoke to Annie, telling her she must really try to go to the seaside for the sake of her little ones. But Annie shook her head. It would cost money; and, though she did not say so to the doctor, it was often difficult to get money just then, even for common necessaries, from Dick. He needed it to trade with, was his excuse. And Annie knew now what the trade was—Dick was a gambler. Night after night he played cards for money, which he sometimes lost, but oftener—for he was clever—won from unhappy men who could ill spare it.

Then the doctor spoke to Bessie, who had been staying with her sister, instead of their mother, Mrs. Clayton being now a confirmed invalid. And Bessie promised that she would see about his directions being carried out.

That morning she was going to insist upon the matter.

"Temptations! Tut! Rubbish!" she said disdainfully. "Don't tell me men are stronger than women, when we see them bowled over, like a set of nine-pins, at the first breath of what you call temptation. Now, there's Dick—yes, Annie, I will speak," she went on, crossing her arms resolutely and looking fixedly at her sister, whose pale face flushed as she tried to stop her. "What business has he to go out every evening *playing cards for money and gambling as he does?* Oh, yes, I know all about it. Robin found out, and he told me—he tells me everything. And there's no excuse for Dick, for he has the nicest home, and the dearest, sweetest wife and prettiest little children of anyone I know. Wants to earn more for them, do you say? What nonsense! He will more likely lose what he has. He had better be careful, I can tell you. Robin says if they once get to know about it at the bank it will be all up with him there; and why shouldn't they get to know, if Robin knows——"

"Hush, hush, Bessie!" expostulated the poor wife, "your voice is very loud, dear, and someone might overhear," and she glanced timidly round. "I don't know how Robin and you got to know, but I hope you will let it go no further. And it is not right of you to blame Dick; I cannot allow it. What he does he does for our sake. I am sure of that."

Bessie tossed her head in a way which signified that she did not share Annie's belief. Then she said, "Well, at any rate, I'm going to make him let you go with me to the seaside for a fortnight—*I am.*"

"No, no, dear; don't try. Dick would take me himself—that is, provided he could get leave of absence from the bank—if it were necessary."

"It is necessary," replied Bessie, "the doctor says so. You and I and the children will go for three weeks to Morecambe, or perhaps longer. Dick will have to pay for it too, for I can't."

Annie looked at her sister almost wonderingly. Bessie was now a woman, far stronger and more independent than she herself had ever been. And Bessie knew all about her trouble.

"Bessie," she said slowly, "I wonder, if you had been in my place, what would you have done when you found out—found out about Dick's gambling?"

Bessie's eyes flashed as she mentally faced the situation. "Well, I shouldn't have let him do as he liked. I wouldn't have done as you've done, Annie," she replied. "I should have taken the children—oh, there was only little Dick then—I should have taken little Dick to him, and said, 'Now choose. Will you give up this hateful gambling you have begun, or will you lose your wife and child? for if you don't give up your evil ways I shall leave you and take our boy away where you will never find him. He shall not be brought up by a gambler.' That's what I should have done, and perhaps then he would have given it all up."

Annie shook her head. That was the sort of thing the New Woman, as they call her, in these days would have done; but her thoughts flew to her marriage vow to obey this man, and she knew that her habits of obedience, meekness, and docility would have made such a step impossible for her. "You don't know Dick," she said; "he is not a man to be moved by threats. Rather than give up gambling he would have let us go, but the pain of it would have hardened him and made him reckless. No, no, he has his rights, and I have my duties, and it would not have been possible for me to carry out the threat. How could I in that case hide little Dick where his father could not find him, or support him and myself?"

"The world is large enough," asserted Bessie. "You could have emigrated to some place where women are scarce, and there you could have earned money by your skill in housekeeping."

"Oh, Bessie, what a poor exchange you would have had me make for my home! Unhappy as I am now, I should be ten times unhappier if I hadn't Dick, for, with all his faults, I love him still—and I pray night and day that this infatuation——"

The door opened and her husband entered, inquiring rather shortly if dinner were ready.

"No, it's not," replied Bessie, "and it won't be until I have had a word with you alone." She drew him out of the room and closed the door, much to Annie's distress, who feared that she would make him angry.

Rapidly Bessie told him what the doctor said, adding that she thought he feared Annie would fall into a decline if she had not immediate change of air and rest as he had recommended.

"Well, I don't see it," said Dick, "and I'm awfully fast for money just now. In a little time I hope to have much more, and then I can afford it better."

"In a little time Annie may be dead," said Bessie, significantly.

This frightened Dick. He immediately consented to their going to Morecambe in a couple of days. Then he returned to the room, talked cheerfully about the proposed journey, declared he did not mind being left alone, and expressed kind hopes that the change would do Annie a world of good.

But that evening he went to his club and gambled more recklessly than ever. He lost heavily, and went home in a rage.

As he inserted his latchkey in the lock, Bessie opened the door for him—much to his irritation, for he did not like anyone to wait up for him.

"I thought I would sit up for you," said Bessie, cheerfully, "I want to tell you what I have been doing. I have been so busy. Do you know, I think we had better go by the express to-morrow afternoon. I have telegraphed for rooms to the place where mother used to go——"

"You've telegraphed?" interrupted Dick, with an oath.

Bessie had never heard him swear before. She was quite frightened. Had he been drinking?

"Yes," she said, "of course, then everything will be ready for us."

"Well, then you'll have to telegraph again and say you are not going," cried Dick, angrily. "I've been obliged to change my mind. I cannot afford it."

Bessie felt very angry too now. She saw his flushed, excited face, his trembling hands, his air of agitation, and knew that he had been out gambling and probably losing the money which his wife so needed. Scarcely knowing what she said, but only being determined to take her sister away from all this misery for a time, she exclaimed passionately, "You'll have to let us go, Dick. For if you don't—*if you don't*," she repeated vehemently, "*I shall myself visit the manager of your bank and tell him that you are a gambler—yes, and that I can prove it.*"

(To be continued.)

THE VALUE OF TRIFLES.

BY GRACE H. DODGE.

THE world is not made up of vast masses, but of the many little things which compose the whole. The stars awaken awe, the great mountain peaks inspire us with a sense of their majesty, but we need the microscope really to reveal our Heavenly Father's care.

The tongue is a little member, but consider its power for good or evil!

Take a small portion of yeast, put it into some dough, and see the effect!

Smiles require little effort, but are all-powerful. Test them in the early morning when breakfast is late, and things are going wrong. Try them in the crowded train and while going shopping. Watch them in the nursery, the hospital ward, and the schoolroom. See their effect in the kitchen, the market, and in the work-room. Add to them a few bright words and you triple the influence. The cordial hand-shake, at times, gives another impulse for good. Flowers are small, but act as sunshine in dispersing gloom. A rosebud, a pink, or even a leaf will often carry a loving message of cheer, while a tempting meal prepared with tender thought helps in many ways.

The neatness of a house, the tidiness of a room well arranged, the games played with old or young, the garden made beautiful and used in dispensing beauty, all seem trifles, but have great influence. Nowhere do such trifles tell as in a home, and a true home-maker must give close attention to the little things. How much good work is done outside by certain members, because in the home one member has learned to bring talent to bear in dealing with domestic trifles! All cannot be great missionaries, social philanthropists, or learned women, but all can do something in a humble way; and their small efforts are blessed as much as the efforts of those who are accounted great. It is not the number or size of the talents, but the use made of such as each has, that is so emphasised in the Gospel parable.

Every neighbourhood has some sick-bed, and why not visit it with cheer and gladness? The bed is not a hospital ward, but often in a ward only one person is really helped by a visitor. Then the county institutions; what sadness and gloom are found in a small country prison or poor-house! Here there may be some little lame child, some blind man or woman, some sin-sick girl or woman. One admires those who visit the great city institutions; why not go to the small ones near by? The same good is needed, and can be given.

Again: country girls need to be taught to sew as well as city children. Cooking classes of one or two will often have as great influence as the large ones of city surroundings. Take two little children on an excursion, and help to mould their lives; the inspiration is not as great as if you had two hundred, but the influence on them will be as great. The small Sunday-school class has possibilities as well as the great missionary field. The angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner that repenteth. Can we not find some such one to bring into the kingdom, and shall we hesitate because it is only one?

Half-a-dozen books may start a circulating library; a few children gathered for musical training suggests the idea of a Choral Union; while a clever leader can form a dozen country girls into a nice, cheery, girls' club. Then a home-reading circle needs but three or four, and surely any neighbourhood will yield this number.

Turn to self-education, and see how much trifles can do in the culture of a woman. Ten minutes a day will accomplish much when multiplied by three hundred. The few papers or books read in odd minutes will soon mean a well-stored mind.

The pennies make pounds, too, and no one has truly learned to save who has not grasped the value of the "nimble copper." One reason why the man with one talent failed was that it seemed so little, so useless. Yet he had as great possibilities as those who had five and ten.

Trifles! the very word should not be used. *Are* there trifles in the world? Has not each smallest flower its mission and place? Is not each grain of sand numbered?

Can we define as a "trifle" in daily living any definite thing? No; the routine may seem composed of little things, but each one counts, and has its value. A cup of cold water given in His name means a gift to the King, and He who knows and numbers each hair of the head asks that we, each and all, shall live the routine of life for Him, and count nothing small or useless if done unto Him.

A HAPPY FAMILY.

OH, tuneful birdies of the air!
No barn nor store have ye;
Yet fearless come, the gifts to share
By Heav'n bestowed on me.

Since Plenty wreathes my happy lot,
And crowned with good am I,
Why should the sweet birds be forgot,
That round my homestead fly?

Bright wings that flutter to and fro
The leafly branches through—
The while I hear your music flow,
My heart sings praises too.

For ever glory to His name,
To whom the birds belong,
Who formed each little feathery frame,
And lists the woodland-song!

The mighty God, the Lord of all,
Of earth and heav'n the King,
Is mindful of the sparrow's fall,
And heeds each tiny wing.

Unchanging is our Father's care,
His love like sunlight glows;
My table doth His grace prepare,
My utmost need He knows.

M. S. HAYCRAFT.

A Mother's Love.—A pathetic incident is told of maternal devotion during a recent outbreak amongst American Indians. A squaw retreated backward before the terrific fire of the white soldiers, holding both her hands behind her. She fell at last, pierced with many bullets. It was found, when the charge was over, that she had sheltered a baby with her wounded body—a helpless babe, plain-looking and copper-coloured like herself. The mother was killed, but the little one lay smiling and unconscious of danger. Tears stood in the eyes of the iron-hearted soldiers when they beheld the touching scene. Oh, pure, noble mother-love! surely the gift is from God Himself.

MY HAPPY POSSESSIONS.

BY CHARLOTTE SKINNER, AUTHOR OF "THE MASTER'S MESSAGES," ETC.

V.—MY AMBITION.

DO not run away with a wrong meaning of the word "ambition." An "ambitious" woman may be thought by some to be quite a dangerous character, but, believe me, it all depends on what the ambition is set. To be ambitious is "to desire something high;" and that something "high" may be something "very good." Nor should any poor struggling woman think it is not for her to be ambitious. The tall, graceful palm requires no support; but the bent reed by the stream yonder needs binding and holding, or the rush of the autumn floods will carry it away. Into the life of every woman should come a holy ambition, to lift us up out of our ruts and low aims, or the great tide of care and sin will carry us away as mere drift.

On What my Ambition is Set.

There is hardly a woman living who is not ambitious, but it is rather amusing to note the variety of things people set their ambition upon. One old lady I knew had a great desire to own a black silk dress, Paisley shawl, and white feather. And then when she got them she was afraid to wear them! Another longed to live in her own house. Some have an ambition to ride in their own carriage, or to see in print what they have written. Others never rise higher than just to wish to please themselves and be entirely their own mistresses. A few long to be of power in the world, to shape the thought and action of others. But listen to my ambition—

"*That I may please Him who hath enrolled me to be a soldier*" (2 Tim. ii. 4).

That I may please Jesus! Not simply our Lord who died nearly two thousand years ago, but Jesus who is with us to-day! I want to cause the smile of approval to come to His face, to feel the touch of His loving hands, to catch the sound of His "Well done!" Is not all that worth setting ambition upon?

What Raised my Ambition.

The fact of my enrolment. And He enrolled me because when He called, I answered. His sweet voice said, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary," and my heart said, "Yes, Lord, I will come," and I went.

"A woman a soldier!" Yes, for my Lord's army needs women as well as men, and "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal."

Some little time ago, through the wilful thoughtlessness of a girl, a young man on a bicycle in Holborn had an upset, and was seriously injured. The police were about to arrest the girl, but through the earnest entreaties of the young man and his taking as much of the blame upon himself as he possibly could, she was allowed to go free. Shortly afterwards this girl was selling rosebuds in St. Paul's Churchyard, when she caught sight of the same young man. Choosing the sweetest, whitest rosebud in her basket, she rushed towards him, and with flushed face and downcast eye quickly placed it in his button-hole. Before the young man had time to recover from his surprise she had fled. He took the little white flower home, and every time he looked at it, he seemed to hear it say, "Out of gratitude I came."

The rose and its wearer are both dead, but the soul of the young man is with his Saviour, who redeemed him from a deeper disgrace than an English prison, and the perfume of the white rosebud still lingers on earth—the perfume of *gratitude*. It was love and gratitude which awoke my ambition.

How my Ambition can be Accomplished.

Our guide-book, the Bible, tells us this. *By trust.* "Without faith it is impossible to please God." This must come first. Suppose when you go out for a day's holiday, leaving your eldest children in charge, you should find on your return that the girl instead of cleaning a certain room had simply hung up a pair of clean curtains, and the boy had painted the broom handles instead of cleaning the boots. You would exclaim, "Oh, children! Why did you not do the right things first?" We are acting just as stupidly if we are doing good deeds before placing our faith on Christ.

By liberality. "A sacrifice well pleasing to God." There was a woman once, who was noted for her rhubarb pies. When asked how she got them so nice, she answered, "I put in as much sugar as the rule lays down, and then I shut my eyes and put in a spoonful more." A gentleman who knew her said, "According to the rule of the rhubarb pie I will give to God. I don't believe in keeping niggardly to a rule with God, saying, 'I'll give so much and nothing more.'"

By doing good. "To do good forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

By communion with God. There is a man spoken of in our Guide-book who "pleased God," and the only definite thing mentioned that he did, was—"he walked with God." I think that means he talked to God as he went about his work.

What my Ambition will Work in Me.

It makes me very *watchful*. Bernardino of Sienna, whenever he preached in the market place, held in his hand a tablet on which was carved, encircled with golden rays, the name of "Jesus." He wanted Jesus to be ever in his thoughts, and in all he said. My ambition makes me watchful of opportunities to please, watchful of His presence. It also makes me *persevere*. Satan may whisper, "What is the good of trying?" but my ambition replies, "Oh, I *must* please Him!"

A young friend was calling upon an old Christian, just waiting for the summons. Said this friend, "Oh, granny, I wish I were as sure of heaven, and as near, as you are!" With a sigh the old woman answered, "And do you really think Satan cannot find his way up an old woman's garret stairs? Oh, if Jesus hadn't said, 'None shall pluck them out of My hand,' I'd have been wandering long ago."

Satan comes to us all, but through the spirit of perseverance, born of my ambition, I am able to resist him. In addition to watchfulness and perseverance, my ambition also works in me the spirit of *self-denial*. Not what will please *me* is now my aim, but what will please God. And therefore I put on one side many

things formerly enjoyed. I cannot take the intoxicating cup, for instance, lest my Lord should be grieved.

There is something very wonderful about my ambition. It not only works these changes in me, but it is the cause of a yet higher development. When God sees we have right ambition, He also begins to work, for we have these words, "God working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight." God even helps me to accomplish my ambition.

WHAT MY AMBITION WILL BRING ME.

Holiness. My ambition is a foe to all impurity. *Happiness.* Consciousness of His approval brings rest of soul. *Honour.* To those who choose the things that please Him, God said to Isaiah He would give "a name better than of sons and of daughters." *Heaven.* Long ago the blue heavens opened, and a thrilling voice proclaimed, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Ere long, I pray that heaven's gate will open for me, and I shall hear the same voice saying, "This is My beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased."

As the scent is to the rose, as the golden light to the sunset sky, as the wild flowers to the hedgerow, as the song to the lips, the words to the melody, and the tide to the great ocean, so is my ambition to my life, making it brighter and diviner. I join my words with those of Paul the Apostle, the co-worker with Phebe and Priscilla, whose lives breathed forth the same ambition, and proclaim unhesitatingly—

"Wherefore we are AMBITIOUS, that whether present or absent we may be accepted of Him."

THE FIRST POCKET.

"HOW strange it is," remarked a lady the other day, "that so few grown-up people can or will understand the desires and ambitions of childhood!"

Never shall I forget my first and greatest ambition. It was that I might have a dress with a pocket in it. The other girls had one, and why could not I? In vain I had asked for it. Mother always said, "There is no use in little girls having pockets. They put everything in them, and tear their dresses to pieces." I protested that *I* would not, but all to no purpose.

At last, when a beautiful pink calico, in spite of all my pleadings, was made without a pocket, I determined to have one at all hazards—and did. I slyly took a sleeve from an old outgrown dress and cut what seemed to me a very nice pocket, and sewed it in my new dress. I then put into my precious pocket my pencils (five in all), a small china doll, a rubber ball, a tin box for my sweets, and a big horse-chestnut. How proud I felt as I thought of the moment when I would show the girls that I had a pocket too, even though it did not set just as I would like to have it! If I could only get away without letting mother find it out, I should be all right.

But, alas! as I was slipping stealthily from the house, my mother called, "Come here, Janie, I want you!"

I obeyed reluctantly.

"What in the world is the matter with your dress?" said she, giving it a little jerk, and, as she discovered the pocket, "Oh!" Then looking at me thoughtfully, gravely, for a moment, she said: "Janie, go and put on your old dress."

With burning cheeks and wildly-beating heart I left her, wondering why she did not scold.

When I came home at noon, mother met me at the door, and said kindly: "My little daughter may wear her new dress this afternoon."

Wonderingly I went to my room to change my dress, when—joy of joys! mother had taken out my miserable pocket, and sewed a nice new one in, just suited to the dress, and then carefully transferred the contents of the old pocket to the new one.

Mine was one of the best of mothers, but never before or since did she do a kinder act than when she made her daughter's pocket. In her busy life she had never before realised the wants of childhood.

On that day began the growth of a purer, more unselfish love between mother and me. SARAH SHERWOOD.

"DONT'S" FOR YOUNG MOTHERS.

DON'T neglect the baby; the little one has the first right to your attention.

Don't do everything for it and with it that you are advised to do; consider well the advice, and then rely most upon your own judgment.

Don't neglect to have the little one's clothing light, warm, loose, and free from pins.

Don't wake the baby to exhibit the colour of its eyes to admiring friends; sleep is its most unquestionable right.

Don't spoil the infant by walking or rocking it to sleep, and do not let anyone else do so; it will sleep best and most naturally when lying upon a comfortable bed.

Don't strain the baby's eyes by allowing a strong light to shine directly into them, especially when it first awakes.

Don't lay the child down with its ears bent away from its head; the result will be a deformity.

Don't try to prevent a teething child from sucking its thumb; the habit helps the work of dentition, and if acquired, it can be easily broken by the application of some bitter tincture to the thumbs, two or three applications only being necessary.

Don't fail to feel baby's hands and feet during cold weather, both day and night. If they become cold, rub them gently till warm; if that does not have the desired effect, wrap them in warm flannels.

Don't forget that socks too small, tight clothing, and anything which interferes with the circulation will produce coldness of the hands and feet.

Don't forget that baby's lungs need plenty of pure, fresh air, but that they are still delicate and ought not to be exposed to raw winds or sudden changes.

Africans at Home.

MOTHERS OF OTHER LANDS.

V.—THE MOTHERS OF AFRICA.

BY B. McCALL-BARBOUR, AUTHOR OF "A FAMOUS MOTHER'S HYMN," ETC.

"THREE distinct Africas are known to the modern world," says Professor Henry Drummond—"North Africa where men go for health, South Africa where they go for money, and Central Africa where they go for adventure."

North and South Africa being comparatively well known, we shall confine our remarks in this present brief sketch to the mothers of Central Africa, or in other words, the "Africa of Livingstone and Stanley."

To detail the various peculiarities of the mothers of even this limited sphere, would take as many volumes as there are tribes, and each of these as numerously paged as there are individuals in these tribes.

We must, therefore, content ourselves merely with some general gleanings, which apply to nearly all the tribes of Central Africa.

To begin with, there are few if any exceptions to the rule of servitude imposed upon the female portion of the community in Central Africa. Like most of the other countries into which we have looked, where superstition and idolatry prevail, the women are made the slaves of the tribe, and the "beasts of burden." Upon the married female devolves not only all the duties of domestic life, but much outdoor labour also. In Africa she "tends the animals and does *all the work*, while the husband sits down and thinks what she had better do when she has done what she is doing."

The African is a genuine child of nature, to whom all the methods of modern civilisation are unknown and miraculous. The customs of his daily existence, both social and domestic, are of the most primeval character. The staple food of the people is of a vegetable nature, of which a small, tasteless millet seed grown in great profusion, is the chief item. It is the work of the mother to look after the process of the preparation of this seed, from its planting to its eating, and in this process she occupies much of her time. The seed when gathered is beaten in a mortar, and prepared in somewhat the same fashion as our own porridge.

A Group of Natives.

Naturally an indolent race from the fact that there is nothing else to do but exist, which means to the African prepare food and eat it, the mothers of

An African Market.

Africa have much time on their hands. The "latest fashion plates" have no interest to them either for their children or themselves, from a dress point of view. Being children of Nature, they are content to wander about in the natural dresses with which she has provided them; or at most with but a short piece of leather or calico, or a bunch of leaves suspended by a cord around their waist. They are not, however, entirely devoid of some sense of decoration, and this is usually exhibited in the dressing of their hair. This, to most of the mothers of Africa, is the chief work of life, next to that of looking after the food. In many cases there is a genuine expression of the idea of beauty in the manner in which the hair is done up, giving evidence that even the "untutored savage" is not entirely void of the instinct of the harmony of form.

To "wash the baby" would in most instances mean to the African mother to rub it with grease. In the tribe known as the "Gani," it is the habit of the mother to "wash" her children daily. As a substitute for a towel she uses her tongue to lick the baby all over. When this is done the child is rubbed over with a mixture of grease and vermilion, which makes it brilliant and beautiful—at least in the eyes of the Gani mother. Having thus had its dress donned for the day; the little one is wrapped up in the skin of some animal and hung in the branches of a tree, which acts as a cradle. While the infant is so deposited, the mother is enabled to look after the other concerns of the household.

The most common form of house or hut which the African dwells in is of a conical shape like a haystack, and is composed of dried grasses laid upon a framework of bamboo poles. There is no furniture to occupy the attention of the housewife in keeping clean, consequently "Spring cleanings" and "washing days" in these primeval precincts are institutions unknown in the experience of the African husband. All the dishes of the household are a few jars and bowls made by their own hands from the earth around them.

One can scarcely believe the trials of the African mother at the time of childbirth. In our own country that is a season of quiet and peace, of much anxiety and care. Not so in Africa, however. The poor mother

An African Village.

is surrounded by great crowds of female friends, who seem to vie with each other in their efforts to make the greatest noise, by dancing, singing, shouting and beating of drums. This, however, being the custom of the tribe, it is borne by the sufferer with all the submission of a religious rite. As regards the religion of the Africans, they have none, in the sense in which we know that term. Their religion is superstition.

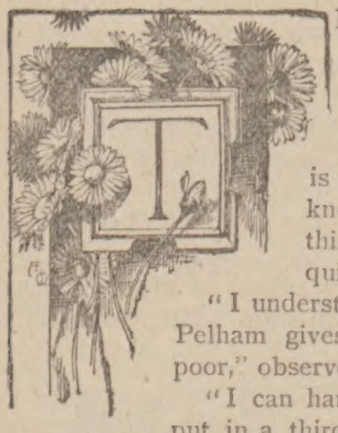
Idol worship, although existent in several tribes of Central Africa, does not prevail so largely as the form of their religion, or as the superstitions which they attach to the numerous animals that are found about their localities.

These superstitions largely exist in the fear of evil spirits, and many curious devices are resorted to for the protection of themselves from such uncongenial visitants. It is amid such superstitious beliefs that the African mother is born and lives, and in turn she transmits those beliefs to her offspring. So, on the superstition goes, and there is no hope of it ever being altered until we, into whose hands has been committed the "Gospel of the grace of God," shall go with hearts of love and His almighty power, to proclaim the message of that love, and dispel the darkness of superstition by the revelation of that "way of holiness" of which it is said "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, but the redeemed shall walk there."

It is but a meagre glimpse of the life of the African mother which such a sketch as this can afford. However, one thing has been made evident, that even in "darkest Africa," with its primeval life and ways, there is a sphere of much hopefulness for the entrance of the "Light of the World" and the spreading of the "kingdom of God." Here, then, we may pray with all earnestness, "Thy kingdom come."

MISS PELHAM'S POOR.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "HER LAST RESOURCE," ETC.



"THERE goes Miss Pelham, in that old black mantle of hers. Poor thing! I'm afraid she finds it very hard to make both ends meet. This is the fifth season, to my certain knowledge, she has worn that thing. It is getting to look quite conspicuous."

"I understand from her niece that Miss Pelham gives away a great deal to the poor," observed a second speaker.

"I can hardly imagine that to be so," put in a third. A group of six or eight ladies were seated in Mrs. Graves's drawing-room, covering some new school library books in black holland. "I think that my husband, from his position as secretary, is pretty well acquainted with the subscribers to most of the funds in connection with our church, and Miss Pelham's name rarely if ever appears among them."

"Perhaps she prefers giving what she is able in private charity," suggested Mrs. May, the lady who had first spoken.

"Well, I visit among our poorer members a good deal," returned the secretary's wife, "and I must confess I do not hear of anything of the kind. But still, it may, of course, be as you say."

"There was certainly something a little peculiar in the way Alice Pelham spoke, when she made that remark to me about her aunt's liberality," said Miss Carberry. "You know Alice is rather different from most girls—she has such a bright, original way of putting things—and I fancy she was going to explain the seeming paradox; but our conversation was just then interrupted, and I heard no more."

"I must say I have never known Miss Pelham to show much interest in the poor," observed Mrs. Graves. "Indeed, she once remarked to me, in this very room, that she thought the poor in this village had so much done for them that they were in danger of losing their independence and self-respect. However, Alice Pelham must know her aunt better than we do, and we will take her word."

Meanwhile, the unconscious subject of these speculations made her way with brisk, elastic steps out of the village, past the green, and along the gorse-bordered, sandy road beyond; pausing only to give a kindly word and pleasant smile to a group of cottage children playing in the road, and to pat the nose of a meek-looking donkey that put its head over the gate. Then she wended her steps along the trimly kept path that led to the door of a pretty villa—it was the residence of the young, newly appointed curate of Sloebank.

The curate's girlish wife herself opened the door to Miss Pelham's knock—the maid-of-all-work was busy upstairs—and she had a fretful baby on her arm.

"I brought that little dress pattern I spoke to you about," said the visitor; "and I thought if I should not be in your way, I might just as well stop and cut it out at once."

"Oh, thank you *so* much," said the young mother, earnestly. "I confess I lay awake last night worrying about it."

Miss Pelham stayed at Myrtle Lodge more than an hour, and when she left the curate's wife bade her good-bye with a bright and grateful face; for the little frock which had seemed like a nightmare to her inexperience was not only cut out, but tacked together, all ready for the machine. This worried and, in many respects, ignorant young mother was one of Miss Pelham's "poor," to whom the humble spinster gave lavishly of her stores of leisure, help, and knowledge.

The church clock was striking four when Miss Pelham left Myrtle Lodge. "There's time to give a look in at my little Ray," she said to herself.

It was at the gate of a large and handsome house that she next paused, and as she opened it a beautiful smile of greeting flashed over her plain features.

On the sunny lawn stood an invalid carriage, and in it lay a pale-faced boy of seven or eight years old. His

attendant was some distance away, engaged in quite an absorbing conversation with the gardener, and the child looked tired and dull. Little Ray was the motherless son of the richest man in Sloebank. Everything that money could procure was his, but the love and tenderness and disinterested ministry which his little heart unconsciously craved were left for Miss Pelham only to bestow; and like a queen she gave.

"You will come again soon, won't you? Oh, *do!*" begged Ray, with arms clinging around her neck as she gave him a farewell kiss. "You tell such *lovely* tales. There's nobody like you!"

In the evening of that same day, had Miss Pelham consulted her personal inclinations, she would have remained quietly at home in the company of an interesting book. But her time was her own, and instead of spending it upon herself she had arranged to give it away.

In this case it was a regular pensioner, if one may so express it, who was the recipient of her bounty. Rhoda Best, the miller's daughter, was chaperoned by Miss Pelham to and from a singing class in the neighbouring town every Wednesday night. The spinster was not a musical enthusiast by any means, and she nearly always returned from the class with a bad headache. But the miller was crusty and strict, even harsh; so that Rhoda's life was a very dull one, and without Miss Pelham she would have lost the only bit of brightness it contained.

To Miss Pelham, like many more of us, the stewardship of money had not been entrusted. The poor, in the conventional meaning of the term, she was little able to help; but it was her pet fancy, shared by her niece, Alice, that her own especial circle of "poor" were all those with whom she came in contact who stood in need of anything she could give.

"Money-poverty is not always the saddest or the hardest to bear," she would say. "And it finds far readier relief than any other kind. Time and thought and service, not to speak of love and sympathy, are better alms than shillings or pence. Of capacity for these God has granted to me freely, and I pray that I may always freely give."

And though the quiet little spinster may have been held in slight regard by those whose names figured largely in the Sloebank subscription lists, there was One above Who noted that, like the widow of old, she had cast into His treasury more than they all.

MANSIONS *VERSUS* HOUSES.

BY LINA ORMAN COOPER, AUTHOR OF "WE WIVES," ETC.

THIS is proverbially an age of hurry and change. We live at high pressure. Much of the restfulness of life is left behind in the race. Especially is this noticeable in our dwellings. Every agent has long lists of houses and freehold properties for sale or to be let. There seems no permanency in one's occupation of a place. Our fathers and grandfathers were content to live year in and year out in the old village. *Now* we must have change and variety in constant succession. We may have gained much from this system. Undoubtedly we have lost somewhat.

In this connection, words even have lost their original meaning and significance.

"Maneo," the Latin root from which our word "mansion" is derived, is an example of this. It means an "abiding-place." Of how many palatial residences can this be said? Lord A——'s demesne, surrounded with its beautifully timbered park, is described as a "desirable mansion" on the estate agent's prospectus. It is to be let for a score of years, or bought outright by the highest bidder.

What a misnomer, then, to dignify it by the word "mansion"! There is no sense of the immutability of an "abiding-place" about it. It is simply a *house* (Anglo-Saxon for lodging or shelter). It may even aspire to the more tender title of "home" (where one stays), because Lord A—— occasionally resides there. The labourer has a right to dignify his cottage by the name of "mansion." The absentee landlord has no business to use the expression.

The Book that is written in the purest of English, beautifully indicates this difference: "In My Father's house are many mansions." It is not irreverent, with the aid of a marginal reading in our Revised Version, thus to paraphrase the verse: "In my Father's shelter are many abiding-places." It just illustrates what I mean.

My object, however, is not simply to point out the changeful meaning of words. I want to urge the women folk in the thousand and one stately homes of England to try and grasp the high ideal of a mansion. Are you, fellow wives and sisters, making your "abiding-places" sweet and pleasant ones? Let them not only be beautiful and cosy, but see that every corner be "throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii. 17). High-art decorations, well-cooked meals, even lovely pictures will not make your house a "mansion" to yourself or your men-folk. That result is brought about by the restful manner, the loving tongue, the ready sympathy.

Then for you, my sorrowful sisters, there is a message in our changed word. "Here," you say, "we have no mansion, no continuing city, no abiding-place." Just so. Then you may the more fully seek one prepared for you above. The comparison is beautiful, and it is meant for you.

And for those in the humble ranks of life, who envy "the big house," there is great satisfaction in this original meaning of an old word. *Your* little home, on the seashore or by the roadside, can be a mansion in reality. It may be—it *ought* to be—the dwelling-place of peace and love and happiness.

It need not be a lonely residence, either. The Lord Jesus has said, "We will come and make our abode" with those that love God and keep His words. Shall we not pray, then, in the words of Lyte's beautiful hymn—

> "Not a brief glance I beg, a passing word,
> But as Thou dwell'st with Thy disciples, Lord,
> Familiar, condescending, patient, free,
> Come not to sojourn, but abide with me"?

A WORD FOR STEPMOTHERS.

BY MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

THE woman who assumes the office of stepmother has three sets of persons to please—her own relatives, her husband's relatives, and the relatives of her husband's former wife.

Her husband's relatives, with a somewhat illogical perversity, contrast her methods with those of the former Mrs. Blank, are quite sure that poor John's substance is being wasted, and that the innovations of the present *regime* are enough to keep Carrie from resting in her grave. Her own relatives are distressed at the burden she has undertaken, and fear that the care of the children will wear her out.

As for the children's own relatives, they can hardly help feeling jealous and uncomfortable when they come to the house—every nook and corner, every carpet and curtain, every pot and pan, reminds them of the dear one, once mistress here, now gone.

With the best intentions, the stepmother is for ever treading on thin ice. Well for her if intrusive and officious neighbours or servants have not doubled and trebled her embarrassments and perplexities by setting the children against her, pitying their hard fate, and assuring them of compassion and sympathy.

Beyond the circle of those immediately concerned, the whole world, as represented in song and story in the literature of every nation, sets its battle in array against the stepmother. Every woman, therefore, who takes upon herself the duties of this position must conquer the world anew. That the common feeling and the common talk on the subject are manifestly unjust, alters no condition of the case. I repeat, she is a brave woman who marries a man to whose children she must become a mother, with everything that motherhood implies, for in the majority of instances this is precisely what she does. Loving the children for the sake of their father, she adopts them into her very heart.

"I felt so left out," said a stepmother to me, "when at little Amy's funeral the minister prayed for her father, her brothers and sisters, and everybody but me."

Evidently the good man had not imagined the stepmother in need of any sympathy, yet she it was who had nursed the lost darling through days and nights of fever, to whom the child had turned in the intervals of delirium, and who had been a true mother to the last hour of the little life.

Said another stepmother: "I shall never know a moment of purer ecstasy than that which I felt when our great sixteen-year-old boy, of his own accord, first called me mother. He came in from school, stood on the stairs, and called me. I could hardly speak for joy."

This very summer I have seen illustrated in the conduct of a stepmother an unsurpassed heroism of patience, fortitude, and courage, little short of sublime. There are mothers *and* mothers. A woman may bear children and bring them up after a fashion, and yet be singularly lacking in the elements which compose true maternity. It is perfectly possible for a stepmother to be a better and more loving mother than the children's own. Not that such an experience is common—I say only that it is possible. Maiden aunts are sometimes endowed with the maternal spirit in a lavish measure unknown to the mother of half-a-dozen children.

Only a woman of rare unselfishness, high conscientiousness, and overflowing tenderness of disposition should ever become a stepmother. To such a one there are rewards and compensations which far outweigh the transitory trials of the relationship.

I always feel like begging the interfering friends, who do so much to make this position difficult, to put in practice the precept of the Golden Rule.

Helps for Busy Housewives.

BEFORE IRONING.—When you take your freshly washed clothes from the line, be sure to fold them carefully. They will prove much easier in ironing for this simple precaution.

Peeling Onions.—Some cooks who have weak eyes always peel onions under water. This prevents painful eye-smarting, while the hands remain free from smell.

Print Dresses are sometimes stiffened with boiled flour, half a tea-cupful being required to a quart of water.

Moth.—If you want to keep your house free from moths, never put down a carpet till the floor is thoroughly dry.

Bright Steel.—To keep polished steel from rusting after cleaning, or when not in use, take a cloth with a little sweet oil on it, and wipe the steel over, so that the surface may have a very light coating of oil.

Pickled Cabbage.—Cut the cabbage, either red or white, into thin slices, and sprinkle with common salt, or steep in strong brine, and allow to lie for one or two days. Then drain for ten or twelve hours and put into jars. Prepare the spiced vinegar as follows: Four pints of strong vinegar, two and a half ounces of salt, one-half ounce of (bruised) black pepper, two and a half ounces of (bruised) ginger, and one-quarter ounce of (shred) mace. Strain, and when cold add to it strong distilled vinegar. Pour this over the cabbage. Another plan is to steep the sliced cabbage in alum water for ten or twelve hours, and, after draining and drying it, to pour the vinegar on it as before. This process causes the cabbage to eat very fresh and crisp, but it takes longer to mature.

To Clean Copper.—One of the easiest and best ways to clean or brighten the copper on any kitchen implement is to rub it briskly with a cloth dipped in butter-milk, to which has been added a little salt.

Old Linen should be carefully preserved, as it is always useful in a case of illness. Afterwards it can be washed and made into lint.

Sweet Cooking Utensils.—In order to remove the odour of onions from a saucepan, some cooks put wood ashes into the utensil, add boiling water, and let it stand for a short time at the back of the stove. After rinsing, the vessel is inodorous.

A Patent "Baby Fastener."—We have recently received from Messrs. J. J. Wilson and Co., of Kendal, an ingenious contrivance for restraining infants in their cots and cribs. It is simple, cleanly, inexpensive, and well adapted for the purpose for which it is intended. Mothers whose children are restless in their beds will find this restrainer most useful.

AN HOUR IN A JAM FACTORY.

BY F. M. HOLMES, AUTHOR OF "MAKING MINERAL WATERS," ETC.

"DO not venture too near; it does fly!"

It did fly indeed, for it was boiling and bubbling to such a degree that splashes were spattering in all directions.

"Does it often fire off hot shot like this?"

"Pretty often, at the final boil."

And as you look around the large room at all the big boiling pans in this London jam factory, you think what a different appearance they present from the comparatively calm and dignified preserve-making in a farm-house kitchen.

Jam Makers at Work.

But where, you ask, is the fire? Well, it is the all-powerful steam that does the business. These pans are all jacketed with coils, through which steam passes, and thus by simply turning a handle the mixture is soon raised to boiling point.

Now, there is a chemistry of jam-making as of other things, and, says our guide, "I think I could tell almost by looking at the fruit how much sugar is necessary to bring out its flavour and preserve it fully. Because," he continues, "fruit which to-day will require so much, may require a somewhat different quantity to-morrow. Changes in its condition may have taken place during the night, however careful you are, necessitating the alteration."

But come from the large boiling-room and look below into the street. There is a long lane stretching away beside the warehouses; and all along that lane stand vans filled high with fruit—currants, strawberries, or what not. Now, the immediate business of the day is to convert this immense cargo into pots of preserve as speedily and satisfactorily as possible. Let us see how this is done.

The yard into which the vans of fruit are drawn is below the level of the ground floor of the warehouse, so that the tail-board of the van is even with the floor, and the fruit can be placed on trolleys and run off to the "picking" room at once.

A large number of women can be employed here at the same time, if necessary. Thus at the season when damsons come in, five hundred women can be put on to pick over the fruit, and twitch off the stalks as fast as they can. Here stands also an ingenious machine for picking stalks off fruit; and there is another,

which seems endowed with intelligence, for cherries or plums are emptied into it by the pailful, and then on one side out run the stones in a cataract, so to speak, while on the other the "pulp" or fruit, with the stones extracted, pours down into a suitable receptacle.

The fruit, then, prepared for boiling, is speedily drawn in pails upon trolleys to the boiling-room, which is next the picking and sorting room, on the same level. Quickly it is tilted into the boiling-pan, the proportion of white sugar added, the mechanical stirrer—which is worked by machinery from the top of the room—set flying, the steam turned on, and in seven or ten minutes the jam is made.

Then does the ever-watchful "boiler" turn off the steam, and the stalwart maidens tilt over the widely open pan, and the new-made jam, steaming and hot, is whisked away to the next department—on the same floor—where it is filled into jugs, butter-dishes, celery glasses, cups, and tumblers, as well as the ordinary gallipot.

Behold then the jam-filling girls at their work. They stand each beside a large, revolving, round table—a table which will turn with a touch of the hand. The table is covered with the jars or jugs into which the jam is to be poured, and close to the table rises the receptacle from which the preserve is taken.

The trolley-girls wheel the easy-rolling little carriage with the pan of jam upon it to the filling room, and two or three girls speedily empty it into the receptacle near the turn-table. Then the filling girl dips a spouted can into the jam, and rapidly pours it smoking hot into the various jars on the table. One touch with the hand and the table revolves, bringing the empty jars into position quite close to the jam.

In her left hand she holds a small smooth board with a rim round it, and this she always places under the can when she is pouring, so that if any jam should be spilt it is caught by the board. A little wooden spatula, or flat spoon, deftly used, soon clears the jam from the board into the receptacle again. The table contains a known number of jars, which, on being filled, are transferred in trays to the lift, which takes them to the floor above, where they are capped, labelled, and finished off.

There is quite a division of labour here also—one girl laying little discs of paper on the top of the preserve, and cleaning off stains of jam on the jar; another covering and labelling it, and a third wrapping it in paper.

"And what is the most popular jam?" we ask, after having watched with deep interest the whole process of jam-making from beginning to end.

That question admits of two answers. Raspberry and also strawberry are great favourites with certain classes, while for a cheap, useful confection for the most popular sale, nothing seems to surpass plum.

But our pleasant visit is over, and discussion of palate preferences cannot be pursued. Thanking the courteous guide for his instructive help, we step outside the great factory. And then it is that we realise clearly the labour and skill required to produce in hundreds of thousands, pure in quality, perfect in flavour, and scrupulously clean in "get up," that toothsome delicacy, a simple pot of jam.

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

September 2nd, 1895.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—If any of you could only see me, I am sure you would pity me. Some of my remarks last month seem to have set people's pens going, and the question is, which letters shall I make public, and which shall I treasure up in my writing-table drawer as tokens of the impossibility of pleasing everybody?

"CLARA" writes (in an uncommonly manly hand) that she thinks it time I had a word to say for the disappointed *men* instead of spending all my sympathy on the women. Well, "CLARA," perhaps you are right, but remember, this is a woman's magazine, and therefore it must necessarily be "ladies first." I know as well as anyone that many a man has been sent to the bad because he has made an unfortunate marriage.

What, then, is the aim and origin of this Parliament in which I am chief speaker? Simply and solely to help mothers and wives (myself amongst the number, for in teaching one must always learn) to do their duties better, and to make their homes brighter. If "CLARA" will read my letter again and substitute "husband" for "wife," I think he (I beg pardon, *she*) will find my remarks were two-edged, and could apply equally to both. The best of friends fall out sometimes, and it is ridiculous to expect that any man and woman can live together for years amidst the winds and waves of this troublesome world without having little tiffs. Unless, indeed, they are poor back-boneless creatures who have no ideas or wills of their own. Shall I get into dreadful disgrace if I say that I think it is not so much the tiffs that hurt us as the forgetting or wilfully declining to "make it up" afterwards? We want to learn a lesson from the children again, and kiss and be friends before the little note of discord has grown into a thundering chorus which will deaden the gentle voice of love.

* * * *

"NURSE" takes up the cudgels on behalf of the children, and I entirely agree with her. She says some complimentary things with regard to my remarks on letting people alone, and would like to hear all I have to say on the subject. Alas! dear Nurse, it cannot be, for I should want the whole magazine to myself; but I do most sincerely agree that much as the art is needed with grown-up people, it is ten thousand times more necessary with children. I don't think that mothers and nurses realise sufficiently the mischief of being continually after the youngsters. With the best intentions in the world they often irritate and tease their charges; whereas, if they would only let them alone to be happy in their own way, provided it were neither a dangerous nor a naughty way, it would be a great deal better for the tempers of all parties.

I hope "ELISE," who wrote to me from Jersey, has sent her daughter to Rotterdam, and that she has benefited by the change. It certainly seems funny that the best way to get to Rotterdam from Jersey is to come to London first, and thence *viâ* Harwich; but it is only another example of the truth of the saying, "The longest way round is the shortest way home."

* * * *

Poor "FANNY" has written me a very sad letter. Hers seems the old, old story of disillusion after matrimony, already referred to in our May number. She has been "well brought up, received a good education, and never dreamed in her girl-days that married life would be a succession of uninterrupted trials, hardships, and struggles."

Just after receiving her letter I heard these words read in church: "Nevertheless, such (*i.e.*, women who marry) shall have trouble in the flesh." Never did the wise, far-seeing apostle speak truer words, and they seemed that day to strike me with a new force.

What is the remedy?

First, I think that mothers should be more careful in the training of their daughters. How many are brought up from girlhood to look upon marriage as the end and aim of existence—even to the extent of sneering at those women whose lot it is to be "old maids." Let a girl be brought up to be a good daughter and sister first. Then, as she gets older, and young men more or less in number begin to hover round her, don't let the mother shut her eyes and throw aside all her responsibility, but let her tell her daughter what married life really means. In many cases, thank God, it does not mean less love than courtship, but it must under the most favourable cases mean more wear and tear of mind and body. It means taking thought and responsibility which have hitherto been borne by others. It means, too, giving up their freedom. Many and many a girl, especially among the working classes, has given up a good place in a tiff, and got married while she was hardly out of her teens, to "be her own mistress." A few short years, if she should prove a good wife and mother, will show her that children and husband rule her actions far more closely than the severest of mistresses.

Secondly, to lessen the grievous number of unhappy unions, I would urge that mothers and fathers should see more of the men whom their daughters are going to marry. Lovers are always on their best behaviour with each other during the few hours they spend together, and it would be a poor look-out for matrimony if they were not. Therefore I would urge that parents should, if possible, let the young man their daughter wants to marry, stay in their house, and feel that it is his home for the time. They will see more of his real character in a month in that way than they would in a year's ordinary courting.

So much for prevention of misery. What can I say as to its cure? I can only say to "FANNY": Bear it bravely. The end will come in God's own time. your best to be a loyal and patient wife.

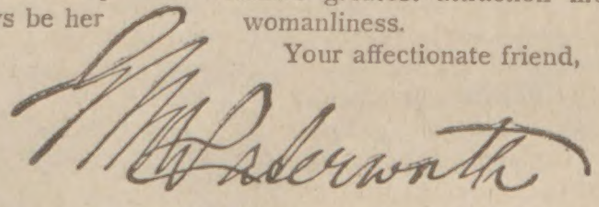
* * * *

"M. E. P." wants a suggestion for a garden party in aid of some schools. The mail cart procession which she had last year was a great success. Try this time, "M. E. P.," a procession of nursery rhyme heroes and heroines, or a parade of the flowers, or a march past of the kings and queens of Europe, accompanied by their flags. See that all the dresses are made of cheap material, so that the profits are not swallowed up.

* * * *

Now, dear "DIANA," I think it is your turn. You ask for any hints I can give you on the subject of cycling. There can be no question that this sport *in moderation* is very good for everyone, especially girls of about fifteen to twenty; but any attempt at overdoing must infallibly be harmful to women of any age. As to the dress most suitable—well, I cannot for the life of me see what connection there need be between cycling and mannishness. A woman needs nothing beyond a pair of riding trousers, confined at the ankle by short gaiters (black are most desirable, because least conspicuous), with a dark blue or grey dress, as narrow as a riding habit, reaching to the ankles, and weighted well with leaden weights. Thus equipped, "DIANA" can enjoy, as I have done, many a pleasant excursion with her husband or brother, without making everybody she meets turn to look at her. If the girls who go in for manly attire only knew what men say of them behind their backs, they would soon drop it. Men may flirt and joke with such an one, but she is the very last person a nice man would like to marry. A woman's greatest attraction must always be her womanliness.

Your affectionate friend,



DROPPED STITCHES.

WITH dimples all playing at hide and seek
In the little round chin and each soft little cheek,
A bonny wee maiden sat knitting away,
Forgetful of dolly, of books, and of play.
"Do you ever drop stitches, my girlie?" asked I.
"Oh, *lots* of 'em!" was the confiding reply,
"But *grandma* takes up all my stitches for me,
An' so I don't *worry* about 'em, you see!"

I wonder when *we* who are busy each day
With the hundreds of duties which fall in our way,
Will cease to grow anxious, and worry and fret
O'er the "stitches" we drop; and try not to forget
That One who is wiser and stronger than we,
Our every hard struggle and error can see,
And for love of His children, with patience most rare
Takes up the "dropped stitches," and lightens each care.

Dear Father, the work we are bidden to do
Is oftentimes hard, and ill-done, it is true,
And try as we will, there are faults every day,
And troubles and cares we can ne'er put away.
Take up the "dropped stitches," dear Father, and so
To work with new courage again we can go.

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

LADIES' dresses are still worn very full in the skirt. On the whole they are not much trimmed, and they are not likely to be while they remain so full, as much trimming would make the weight unendurable. The front of the skirt is shaped to the figure as closely as possible, and this requires some skill in adjusting; while the back is laid in pleats, and sometimes the sides also. Great care and skill are expended over these pleats, so as to make them fall gracefully. A piece of stiff lining is placed between the stuff and the ordinary lining six or eight inches wide in front, and up to the waist at the back. This is scarcely necessary when box-pleats are used, but when the skirt is arranged in godet or organ-pipe pleats, it cannot be omitted. These pleats have to be kept in place by one or two wide tapes stitched to each pleat on the inside of the skirt.

Fig. 31.

The bishop sleeve, so much in vogue for blouses and children's dresses during the summer season, is still in demand for jackets as well as dresses.

Very few dress bodices reach below the waist, and they are all very much trimmed, especially about the neck, where ruches of all colours and a variety of materials and flowers are freely used. In some cases a long lace jabot hangs from the lace or ribbon neck-band. Bows and ends of ribbon adorn the back of the neck.

For out-door garments, jackets will be to the front; capes, which have had such a long run, having to retire into the shade again. Consequently many new and some very becoming shapes in jackets have already made their appearance. Loose, tight, and semi-fitting ones all come in for a share of favour. We also see open jackets, others which open over short, broad revers, while a third shape buttons close up to the throat. But of all the new shapes shown, sacque jackets are decidedly the most fashionable, especially for young ladies. These are made quite short to match the dress, while the long sacque coats reach to the bottom of the dress.

Fig. 32.

Cloth with a smooth satin surface is much more fashionable than rough tweeds, fineness of texture and smoothness of surface being the leading characteristics of all the new coatings for the season.

Fig. 31. We show here one of the new sacque coats just referred to. It will not be so difficult to make as a tight-fitting coat, the only seams being those on the shoulders and under the arms. Forest green is a very fashionable colour, and also a durable one for coats and jackets. Reversible cloth is very much used, and in some cases saves lining. The seams are covered with a strip of cloth stitched on either side. The coat can be cut either double or single breasted, and opens with revers and a turned-down collar, which is faced with velvet. Bright buttons are often used, in gold, silver, and cut steel; the latter look very well on dark green. The pocket tab is stitched down under a slit, where the pocket is let in and sewn invisibly on the wrong side.

Fig. 33.

Fig. 32. This is one of the new neck ornaments so much used at the present time. The neck band is two inches wide, is underlined with collar stiffening, and made of fancy silk. In front there is a piece of fancy silk about fifteen inches wide, which must be made of double silk at the ends or lined with sarcenet. This is laid in pleats across the front, the stitches being hidden by a piece of passementerie or fancy buttons, below which a jabot of wide lace is set on; it may be of any width desired, but should be about half a yard in length. With this description our readers will scarcely need a paper pattern, but patterns can be supplied.

Fig. 33. This is a dainty pinafore, very suitable for a little maid from three to six years of age. Muslin or fancy piqué can be used, either in cream or white. The skirt is pleated in front into a shaped neck piece, while the back is drawn in with sash ends of the material. A narrow frill edged with embroidery finishes the neck piece. The skirt can be tucked or edged with embroidery as desired.

Fig. 34.

Fig. 34. Cool days will be upon us almost before we are aware of them, and as one so often hears of disastrous effects from sudden chills, it is well to be prepared with under-flannels. The pattern here illustrated combines many advantages. It fits close up at the neck, and closes at the side with a good wrap, so as to avoid an opening in front, which sometimes gapes open and exposes the most sensitive part of the chest. Long or three-quarter length sleeves can be used, but the former give the greater protection.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Fig. 31, 6½d.; Figs. 32, 33, and 34, 4½d. each. Address, "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.